

The Cherry Tree

USS George Washington (CVN 73)

Command Ombudsman Newsletter

March 2006



GW Back in Business



After spending most of 2005 undergoing scheduled maintenance at Northrop Grumman Shipyard, USS George Washington (CVN 73) has been working hard to get certified and trained up for operations later this year. (Photo by PH3 Michael Blackwell III)

The Who's and What's of GW's Ombudsmen

It's been almost a year since our last Newsletter, so let's reintroduce our reigning ombudsmen Elizabeth and Tamara and welcome four new ombudsmen to the *GW* family: Stephanie, Sherri, Shannon and Katheryn.

More than 30 years ago, Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Elmo Zumwalt established the Navy Family Ombudsman Program to provide a liaison between commanding officers and military family members. He took this concept from a program used in the 19th century in Scandinavia, when ombudsman positions were used to allow common citizens access to express their concerns to high government officials.

Throughout the years, ombudsmen have played vital roles in keeping military families informed about their servicemembers' commands, especially during deployments. They are the one to turn to whenever a helping hand is needed, lending support, guidance and a reassuring smile when a loved one is at sea and things are a little stressful.

A command ombudsman is appointed by the CO. This volunteer position is usually filled by the spouse of an enlisted service member to act as a full member of the commanding officer's team. They serve as a communication link between the CO and family members, and as information and referral specialists.

The ombudsmen are the primary contact between the ship and the family members back home. So feel free to contact them if you have any questions. They are here to help anyway they can.

GW Officers Spouses Club

Janet is president of *GW* Officer Spouse Club and you may contact her at GWOSC@cox.net.

They are a charitable and social organization open to all officers' spouses and their families.



GW Ombudsmen

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| TAMARA | (757) 544-0397 |
| ELIZABETH | (757) 544-0403 |
| STEPHANIE | (757) 289-0530 |
| SHERRI | (757) 289-0534 |
| KATHERYN | (757) 289-0547 |
| *SHANNON | (757) 289-0540 |
| *Shannon is a prospective Ombudsman. | |

GW Enlisted Family Support Group

The enlisted family support group is a charitable and social organization open to all enlisted spouses and their families.

Our meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month, at 6:30 PM, in building P-28 (located just behind the Hobby Shop) on Naval Station Norfolk.

To sign up to receive email reminders or to view a calendar with upcoming events, visit our website at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/GWEFSG>.

As always, feel free to contact me directly with any questions at cwade0@yahoo.com or through the link on the website.

We look forward to seeing you at our next meeting!

The Cherry Tree is an authorized publication for the families serving aboard **USS George Washington** (CVN 73). Contents herein are not the views of, or endorsed by the U.S. government, the Department of Defense, the Department of the Navy, or the commanding officer of **USS George Washington**.

COMMANDING OFFICER
USS GEORGE WASHINGTON CVN 73
BOX 1
FPO AE 09550-2873
(757) 445-XXXX

Commanding Officer
CAPT Garry White
Executive Officer
CAPT Kent Whalen
Command Master Chief
CMDMCM(SW) David Rudd

GW Hosts Family Fair for Crew Members, Families

By JO2(SW/AW) Jerry Foltz, USS George Washington Public Affairs

GW hosted a Family Fair Day Jan. 25 in Hanger Bay 2 for Sailors and family members to prepare for its upcoming underway obligations.

The fair, sponsored by GW's Command Religious Ministries Department (CRMD), presented information and services for the crew and their families to receive

important information to make the loss of a spouse as painless as possible before any extended time away from home.

"Everybody's going to cope with absences differently," said Cmdr. Bob Williams, GW's command chaplain. "The idea is to not feel like you're out there by yourself when dealing with day-to-day challenges."

Departments set up booths in the hanger bay to show the many different aspects of GW life and what the aircraft carrier contributes to homeland security. Tours were conducted to show family members the different places a Sailor's day may take them while stationed aboard. From the flight deck to crew's living spaces, families got a 'hands on' feel of a Sailor's life.

"The more of the ship a family sees, the more reassured they feel when their loved ones are away," said Capt. Garry White, GW's commanding officer, during a Captain's Call the day of the event.



Later in the evening, White, Cmdr. Kent Whalen, GW's executive officer, and CMDCM (SW) David Rudd, GW's command master chief, personally addressed and answered many family concerns.

Booths were set up providing information about various services offered to military families facing difficult issues such as dealing with stress, a pre-deployment brief by White, the keys to military family success and preparing for deployments.

"This is an excellent time to tie up any loose ends, such as setting up a power of attorneys to arranging for day care, to keep the anxiety level to a bare minimum while Sailors are serving abroad," said Williams.

Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC) representatives were also on hand to educate families on the services the center has to offer, including clinical counseling, family advocacy, spouse employment,

new parent support, financial counseling, as well as classes on transitioning from military to civilian life.

The GW command ombudsman attended to provide a front-line information source for family members. As a direct link of communication between the command officer and family members, they are able to pass on ship-

specific information, conduct family support groups meetings for social opportunities and help to find common answers to common problems with others who shared some of the same dilemmas.

"This program gives spouses and a little more control in their lives, and in turn makes a better Sailor," said ombudsman Stephanie Bellisle.



LITTLE CREEK 757-462-7563

Mon-Fri 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

NEWPORT NEWS 757-688-NAVY

Mon-Thu 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

NORFOLK 757-444-2102

Mon-Fri 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

NORTHWEST 757-421-8770

Mon-Wed 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

OCEANA 757-433-2912

Mon-Thur 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

YORKTOWN 757-887-4606

Mon-Thurs 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Pre-Deployment Checklist

Power Of Attorney

Banking Decisions

Right email and mailing address

Emergency Plans

Allotments

Vehicles

Location of Important Papers

Personal Data

Split pay Options

Social Security Number

Page -2 correct

Tri-Care issues

This list can go on and on. However we all need to make sure that we are ready when the unexpected happens.

Do you have a power of attorney for when your car breaks down (or anything else unexpected) and you don't have enough money to cover it?

The Navy & Marine Corps Relief can help you faster if you have the power of attorney.

This is a checklist that will help you get the information you need now before your Sailor is gone and it is harder to get things done.

Please refer to the Deployment Readiness Guide handed out at *GW's* Family Night because there is a complete list of things of things to do in it.

George Washington Wins Retention Excellence Award

By JO3 Latisha Gholston

USS George Washington Public Affairs

GW won the Retention Excellence Award, previously known as the Golden Anchor Award, for fiscal year 2005. This is the first time in seven years that *GW* has won this award. The crew was informed of the announcement by the *GW's* commanding officer, Capt. Garry White, during a "Captain's Call" production Jan. 13.

Fleet Forces Command initiated the Fleet Retention Excellence Program that includes the Retention Excellence Award for commands that sustain superior levels of retention.

"We have been working hard and have done a great job taking care of our Sailors," *GW's* command career counselor, Navy Counselor 1st Class(SW/AW) Tony Tilmon said. "Being proactive was one of the keys to success."

Retention is directly related to command climate, involved leadership, clear standards and policies, and promotion of quality service.

"It's our goal to take care of our Sailors," said Aviation Maintenance Administrationmen 1st Class (AW/SW) Daniel Negron, AIMD departmental career counselor. "It's ideal keep Sailors educated about what the Navy has to offer, as well as the transition back to the civilian world."

"We've made ourselves approachable and available to help. That's essentially important and helps keep the lines of communication open," Tilmon added. "No one should ever be hesitant or afraid to ask their departmental career counselor for assistance."

Last year, selective reenlist bonuses were at its highest. This, in addition to showing a general level of concern, were just a few things that kept Sailors motivated and focused.

"Sometimes, just letting Sailors know that someone is concerned about the future of their career is all that's needed to motivate them to reenlist," Tilmon said.

Additional aircraft carriers that won the award were *USS John F. Kennedy* (CV 67), *USS Dwight D. Eisenhower* (CVN 69) and *USS Harry S. Truman* (CVN 75).

GW Earns Flight Deck Certification

By JO2(SW/AW) Jennifer Crowell, USS George Washington Public Affairs

GW and Carrier Air Wing SEVENTEEN (CVW 17) successfully completed flight deck certification Feb. 3, after the ship has not launched or recovered aircraft in more than a year. The certification comes four days after GW left Norfolk Naval Station.

"Flight deck certification is about a two to three-day evolution," said Capt. David Fox, GW's air boss. "Whenever you don't launch and recover aircraft for a certain amount of time, you have to recertify."

Getting the flight deck certified by Commander, U.S. Naval Air Forces, Atlantic (AIRLANT) Fleet Handling Team is a major step in preparing a ship to return to combat readiness.

In order to receive the green light to resume flight operations, a series of check lists is followed, covering everything from the catapults and arresting gear down to the lighting on the flight deck and in the hangar bay.

Another part of the certification process included how Sailors responded to simulated crashes and fires. At

first, drills were run by just Air Department. Once CVW-17 arrived, everyone involved in the certification witnessed the early stages of teamwork.

"The GW-CVW-17 team is coming together," said Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handler) 1st Class (AW) Christopher Harris of air department. "AIRLANT was very impressed by the amount of teamwork everyone showed."

"Since we've been out here, the air wing has jumped in, played and executed," said Fox. "It's not just in the drills. There's been a lot of interaction around the rest of the ship."

As the ship receives the go-ahead to carry out its primary mission, Fox commended the amount of training and degree of professionalism shown by everyone involved in the inspections.



"I'm proud of what's going on," said Fox. "The aviation boatswain's mates are out here day and night in all types of weather making things happen in a very dangerous place."

After a successful certification, GW's air department looks forward to continuing the mission and completing carrier qualifications.

"The training period is over," said Harris. "Now we can get into doing what we have to do."

"It's very humbling to be up here," said Fox, "looking down and seeing it all come together after we've trained so hard."

GW Celebrates Namesake's Birthday

By JO1 Rebecca Perron, USS George Washington Public Affairs

GW crew members celebrated the birthday of the ship's namesake, President George Washington, with a review of his life and the ships named after him throughout the Navy's history, followed by a cake-cutting ceremony, Feb. 14.

At the beginning of the ceremony, a member of the command's history and heritage committee gave the crew a look at the man and great legend Washington left behind. Reading about his life and accomplishments gave the crew a snapshot of who the father of our country really was.

After the speakers gave tribute to our first president, White helped serve cake to the crew while they reflected in the celebration.

"The ceremony was beautiful," said Aviation Ordnanceman

1st Class (AW/SW) Eugene Cron, of weapons department. "They had a great set up and a beautiful cake. I'm really impressed with the speakers and how they applied their knowledge of George Washington."

After the cake cutting, the crew had the opportunity to tour the George Washington Room, the ship's museum, learning more about the father of the nation.

"This ceremony is another example of the tremendous 'Spirit of Freedom' GW has," White said. "It's important and fitting to remember the contributions he made to our nation and that we follow in his footsteps and continue that legacy by making the same sort of contributions."

News You Can Use

TAXES. Tax time is upon us once again. Active Duty military can print there W-2 off of the web at www.mypay.dfas.mil.

The VITA Office on the ship and the Norfolk Tax Assistance Center can help you with your taxes for free. The off ship site is located in Building B-30 on Gilbert Street. You can contact them for more information on what you need to bring with you at 444-9081.

Here is a reliable web site www.taxslayer.com that will also do active duty military taxes for FREE.

GW FAMILY PICNIC. Saturday, April 29, 2006 from 11am -2 pm at the Oceana picnic area, the GWOSC and the GWESC will be hosting a family picnic. Grab your picnic baskets packed with your favorite food and come out to enjoy the bounce houses and fun and games for the kids or just show up to enjoy the company of GW family members! Come and enjoy all the activities.

COMING IN JUNE. GW will be hosting Mrs. Lynne Cheney on board for a book signing sometime in June. This is subject to change so feel free to call the ombudsman or attend the family support group meetings to get the most up to date information.

BUSCH GARDEN FANS. Anheuser-Busch is proud to announce the "Here's to the Heroes" program will be extended through 2006. The program offers servicemembers and their families free admission to Anheuser-Busch theme parks. Additional information is available on www.herosalute.com or 1-800-DIAL-BUD.

Voting Assistance Officers Help Sailors With Absentee Voting

By JOC(SW/AW) Sherri Onorati, Navy Voting Assistance Program

The Navy is encouraging Sailors and their families to take part in the 2006 election season with help from the Navy Voting Assistance Program.

The program and its Navy Voting Assistance officers can assist with the process of absentee voting in time for the start of this year's election season, which began March 7.

Generally, all U.S. citizens 18 years or older who are or will be residing outside the United States during an election period are eligible to vote absentee in any election for federal office. In addition, all members of the uniformed services and their family members who are U.S. citizens may vote absentee in federal, state and local elections.

Once filled out and mailed to the applicant's local voting official in their state of residence, the FPCA acts as a request for absentee ballots for any elections to be held that year. The Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) is available to all U.S. citizens from local voting assistance officers and the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) Web site, at www.fvap.gov.

Voters in state primaries will select their party's candidates for state and federal offices, such as governor, U.S. senator, and members of the U.S. House of Representatives. Dates for the 2006 state primaries are scheduled throughout the year. Visit www.cni.navy.mil/NavyVote/Index.html for more information.

Crack Down on Cell Phone Usage Begins

By JOSA Charles A. Ordoqui, Fleet Public Affairs Center Atlantic

The Navy began issuing warnings to all motorists who are pulled over for using non-hands-free cell phones while driving on Navy installations March 1.

This restriction follows a Department of Defense regulation banning the use of non-hands free cell phones on military installations unless the vehicle is safely parked.

The Defense Department developed the regulation based on a study by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, which found cell phone use to be the fastest growing and most visible cause of automobile accidents caused by distracted driving.

Armed forces traffic tickets will be given to those pulled over for using their cell phone during the Active Enforcement phase, which will become active at a later date.

The restriction not only applies to service members who drive on Navy installations, but also to their families, civilian employees and visitors to the base, as well.

This regulation will be enforced inside the fence line of the base, and in the vicinity of the Navy Exchange and any other areas that are patrolled by Navy law enforcement.

Base personnel with questions about the new procedures are encouraged to use their chain of command.

GW Plans for Tiger Cruise, Memorable Experiences

By PH3 Michael Blackwell

Many families and friends will have a once in a lifetime chance to get underway with *GW* and crew during the upcoming Tiger Cruise scheduled for the last part of the spring deployment. Sailors can share the memorable experiences of Navy life and life onboard *GW*.

A Tiger Cruise allows Sailors to bring guests on board for an underway tour of the ship that typically lasts anywhere from two days to a week. During this time, guests can expect to gain a more personal view of what the crew does daily.

Each department and various divisions aboard *GW* will have tours set up to provide an in depth look at every as-

pect of ship life. Tigers will get to experience everything from aircraft launching from the flight deck to suiting up in an SCBA.

The port of departure for participants is still undetermined, but the most likely port is Mayport, Fla.

In order to sign up a friend or family member, Sailors must turn in all paperwork required to their divisional representatives by March 23. Members must turn in this paperwork by this date to ensure a proper screening has taken place.

These forms include a registration form, a general release from liability, a medical screening form and a consent to treatment form related to emergency

medical care. A special power of attorney will be required for children not sponsored by a legal parent or guardian.

Also required is a payment of \$40 in the form of a check or money order. Checks must come from the crewmember, not the Tiger. This payment will cover the cost of food and accommodations provided aboard. Crewmembers may also purchase a Tiger Kit for \$25, which includes *GW* clothing and other keepsake items.

The opportunity to share a personal look into *GW*'s commitment to our country with friends and family is an experience that will last a lifetime.

Martin Named *GW*'s Sailor of the Year

OS1(SW/AW) Timothy Martin, from Operations Department, is USS George Washington's Senior Sailor of the Year (SOY).

"This was my first time being nominated since I've been on board *GW*, and I'm honored and shocked that I actually won," said Martin.

"There are so many other outstanding first class' that do an excellent job."

OI Division's Leading Chief Petty Officer, OSC(SW/AW) Kevin Guy says, "Martin is the type of person that gives 150 percent day in and day out no matter what he's doing. He's an outstanding worker."

OS1(SW) Deborah Smith, OI Division's work center supervisor, says "Martin's intelligence and knowledge is what draws people to him. He's always willing to go above and beyond to help others."

"Success is simple. Hard work pays off in the long run," said Martin. "Don't worry about what other people are doing. Do the best job you can possibly do, no matter what the task at hand is."



Marlatt Named *GW* Junior Sailor of the Year

IC2(SW/AW) Ryan Marlatt, of Air Department, was named *GW*'s Junior Sailor of the Year (JSOY).

"I'm thrilled to be named JSOY," said Marlatt. "It's an honor that my co-workers nominated me for this award."

ABECS(AW) Richard Brock, his leading chief petty officer, said Marlatt's strong sense of duty and the respect he carries both up and down the chain of command helped him snag one of *GW*'s most prestigious honors.

Always busy, Marlatt is able to balance underway watches in Fresnal Lens Optical Landing System (FLOLS) and Integrated Launch and Recovery Television System (ILARTS) with acting as V-2's divisional career counselor, providing direction for new and seasoned Sailors alike.

Being able to mentor undesignated Sailors as they make career decisions is just one of the ways Marlatt has helped steer the next generation of Sailors on the path to success. "Get your warfare pins," he said. "They really do count for something career-wise."

